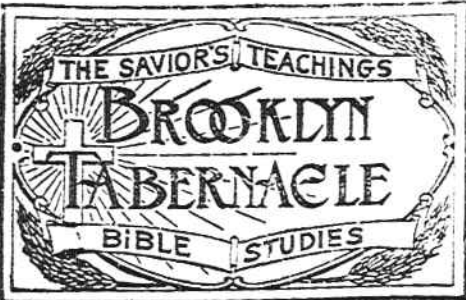


Friday, December 9, 1910.



THE PRINCE OF LIFE CRUCIFIED
Matthew 27:33-50—December 11

"He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities."—Isa. 53:5.

THE trial of Jesus really took place shortly after his arrest, but, on account of the Law requiring a death sentence to be passed in daylight, a morning meeting of the Sanhedrin was appointed, which, in a perfunctory manner, confirmed the high priest's decision of the night before, that Jesus had blasphemed the Creator when he claimed that he had come into the world in accord with the Creator's long-promised plan that he should redeem Israel and the world from the death sentence, that in God's due time he might establish the Messianic Kingdom for the blessing of Israel and all the families of the earth.

The matter was rushed through lest the gathered multitudes, who had shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David," when Jesus rode upon the ass five days before, should undertake again to proclaim him king. No execution could take place during the Passover week. And if Jesus were held a prisoner they knew not what might happen to him or to them. They had, therefore, but a few hours in which to carry out the plan which they believed would rid their country of a

error of the wicked—into violating the rights of others and thus fighting against God.

Pilate heard the accusations, realized that there was no truth in them, and then gave his decision: I find no fault in Jesus, but, seeing that such a commotion has been created, I consider it necessary in the interests of peace to satisfy the unrighteous demands of the clamoring multitude. I will therefore have the prisoner whipped, although I acknowledge he is not deserving of punishment. The whipping will be in his own interest, as well as in the interests of the peace of the city, for by satisfying the clamor of the multitude the life of Jesus will be spared. As political decisions go, this was a very fair decree. Magistrates recognize that absolute justice is not always possible in dealing with imperfect conditions.

But the rulers would not be satisfied with anything short of Jesus' death. The rabble was exhorted to shout, Crucify him! Crucify him! It seemed impossible for Pilate to appreciate that such a frenzy could be aroused against so innocent a person. So he inquired, What evil hath he done? But the answer was, Crucify him! Alas, how human passion can ignore every principle of righteousness! To add to Pilate's perplexity, his wife now sent him word, Have nothing to do with this just person, for I have had a horrible dream which connects itself with him.

As a last resort Pilate caused Jesus to be brought to a prominent place where the multitude could all see him and then he cried out to them, "Behold the Man!" See the character of the man you are willing to crucify. Note that he has most kingly features, such as none of your race possess—nor others. Would you crucify the very best sample of your race? Consider; be reasonable. Behold the Man! It has for years been a custom with you that the Government at this season release a prisoner. So, then, consider that Jesus has been condemned and that your conception of justice has been satisfied and that now I release him to you. But the multitude cried out so much the more, Crucify him! Release unto us Barabbas (a robber and dangerous character).

Thou Art Not Caesar's Friend

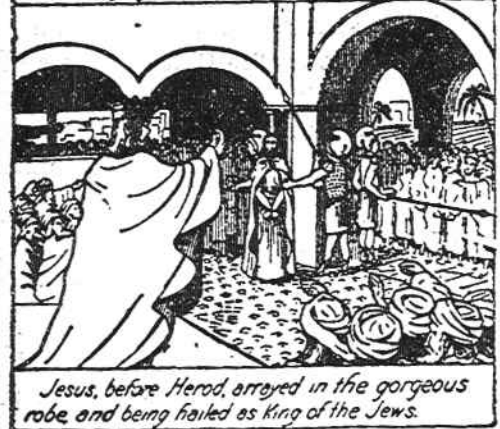
The Jewish leaders were shrewd. They knew that treason to Rome was one of the most serious offenses and in the fact that Jesus had spoken of himself as a king they had the lever wherewith to compel his crucifixion. They used it, assuring Pilate that if he let the prisoner go they would report him to the Emperor. Pilate knew that he would have difficulty in explaining such a case and that the Roman Government would agree with the decision of Caiaphas that one man should die rather than have any commotion in their dominion. Thus compelled, Pilate finally acceded and wrote the papers of execution, but before doing so he took a pitcher of water and in the sight of the people washed his hands, saying, "I am guiltless of the blood of this just person."

The execution proceeded. The soldiers already had two thieves to crucify and merely added another cross and the procession started for Golgotha, a hillside near where the face of the rock much resembles a skull—Golgotha signifying the place of a skull. It is just to the north of the city, outside the wall. New buildings and a wall recently erected hinder visitors at the present time from getting the skull effect as formerly. The crime of each culprit was, by Law, inscribed over his head. Above the Master's head was his crime—"Jesus, King of the Jews."

Satan and his deluded dupes evidently thought that they had finally disposed of Jesus. The priests and elders mocked his declaration that he was the Son of God and demanded that, if he were such, he should demonstrate it by leaving the cross. They realized not the truth, that it was necessary for him to die for man's sin, in order that, by and by, he might have rightful authority, in his glorious Kingdom,



Pilate refusing to sentence Jesus unjustly, and arranging for him to go before Herod for trial.



Jesus, before Herod, arrayed in the gorgeous robe and being hailed as King of the Jews.

man whom they considered a deceiver and one likely to get them into trouble with the Government at Rome.

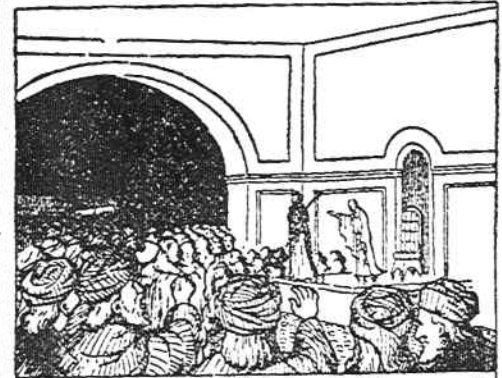
The Sanhedrin had authority to judge the people along the lines of their religion, but was prohibited from executing the death penalty. Hence it was necessary, after the condemnation of the Sanhedrin, to take the case before Pilate, the Roman Governor. Realizing that Pilate would not recognize blasphemy as a cause for death, the charge against Jesus, before Pilate, was a totally different one namely, that Jesus was a seditious and raiser of disturbance; that he claimed to be a king and that his freedom was inimical to the interests of the Roman Empire. The foolishness and the hypocrisy of such a charge were too transparent to need assertion. Pilate perceived that for envy they were delivering him—because he and his teachings were having more influence with the common people than could be exercised by the chief priests and scribes. Pilate relieved himself of responsibility by declaring that since the home of Jesus was in Galilee, King Herod, the Governor of Galilee, should have the jurisdiction of the case, which he was glad to get rid of.

Jesus Before King Herod

This was an unexpected difficulty, but Herod's palace was not far distant. He was glad of the opportunity to see Jesus, of whose miracles he had heard much. As he looked at the Master's noble features and beheld in him purity and gentle dignity, it must have seemed ridiculous that such a person should be arraigned as a seditious and a man dangerous to the interests of the peace of the country. After a few taunting words and jests, the palace guards took a hand with the one whom their master treated flippantly. They put upon him a purple robe and a crown of thorns and mocked at his unkingly appearance. Then Herod declined to act in the case and sent the prisoner back to Pilate, perhaps feeling that he had had a sufficiency of trouble in connection with the beheading of John the Baptist a year or so before. The matter was a joke between Herod and Pilate—dealing with the case of a man claimed to be so dangerous that he must die thus, when he manifestly was so pure and innocent that the weakest would be safe with him.

Pilate's Perplexity Increased

Pilate was disappointed when Jesus was brought back to his court. The case was an unpleasant one to settle. The prisoner manifestly was innocent of any crime, yet his accusers were the most prominent men in the nation and city over which he had charge. Their good will must be preserved, if possible, and they were evidently bent on the murder of their innocent captive under the form of legality. What a pity it is that religion has been so often misrepresented by her votaries in every age of the world! A lesson which we all should learn is to search the motives and intentions of our own hearts, that we be not led into the



BEHOLD THE MAN! Pilate is much perplexed, but yields to the desires of the people.

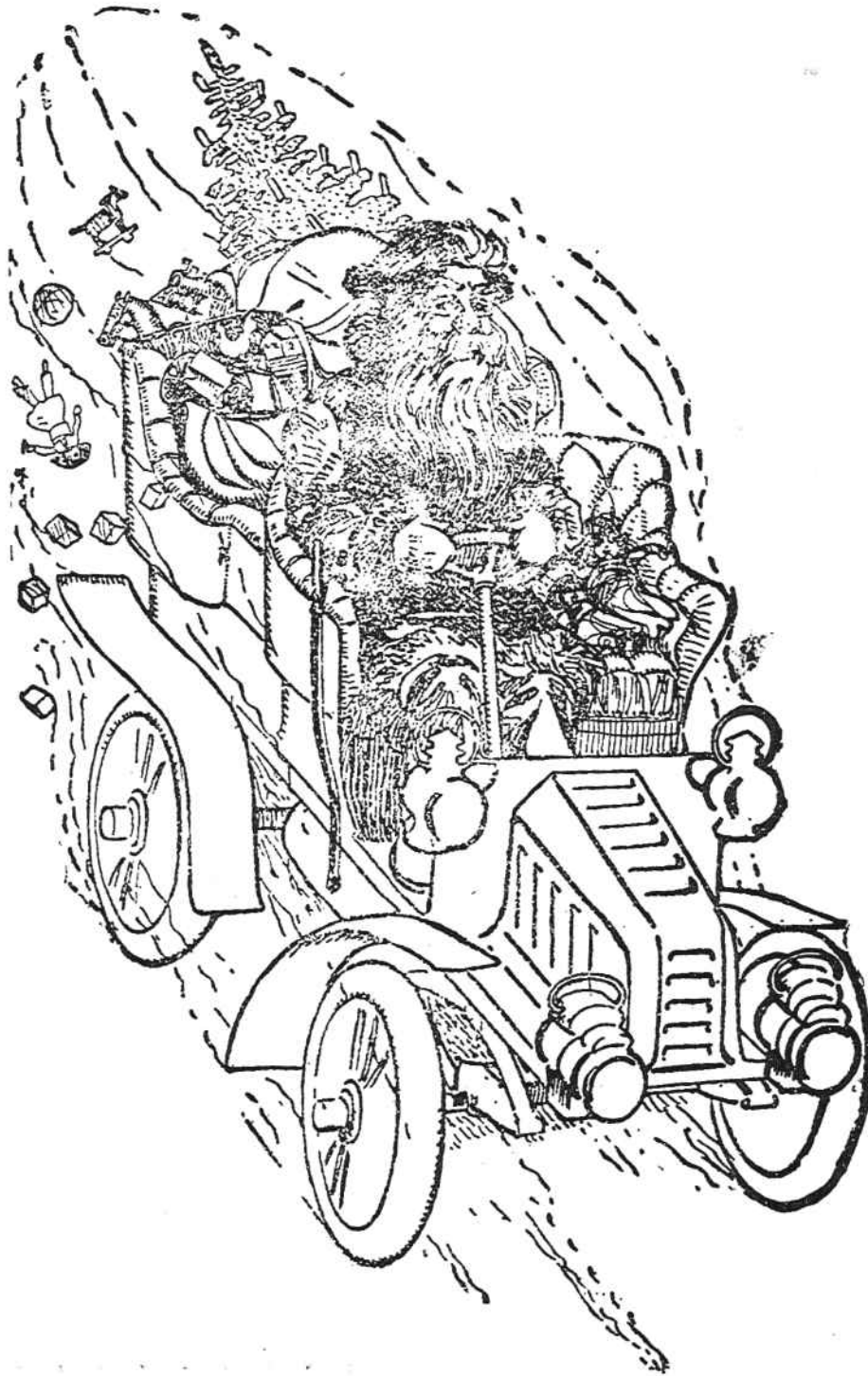


On the way to Calvary, where the 'Prince of Life' experienced the end of his sacrificial death.

to restore all mankind to full perfection and life under the terms of the New Covenant, of which he will be the Mediator. (Jer. 31:31.) At the sixth hour, noon, darkness settled down for three hours and then Jesus died, crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In order that he might fully experience the weight of Divine Justice which belonged to the sinner, it was necessary that the Father should hide himself from him, as though he had been the sinner. This temporary separation from the Father was evidently the severest blow in all of the Master's experience.

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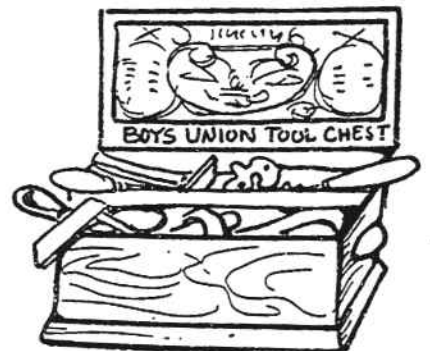


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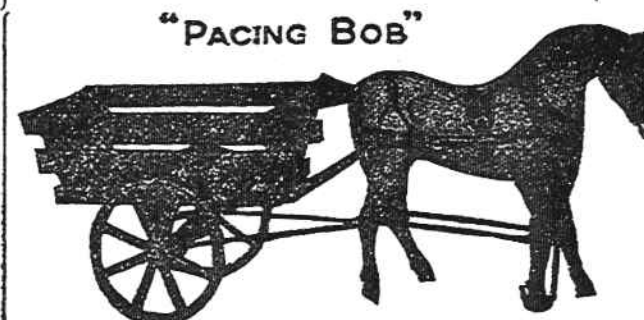
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